

Book IV

# SOLAR WARS

## THE DAWN OF TWO SUNS

A long time ago, in unmeasurable eons of time... not in some distant galaxy, far, far away... but right here, in our own cosmic backyard... in our solar system... there was no earth!

Chapter 19

### Clash of the Titans, Part I



**Kael'Ryn**  
MERCURY



**Princess Lysara**  
VENUS



**General Vaelor Krynn**  
MARS



**VX-17 (Vex)**  
Combat-Droid  
JUPITER



**The Shallit'Biru**



**Xal'Zirath**  
MERCURY

**DEE DOWNING**



## Chapter 19: Clash of the Titans, Part 1

The chamber was dimly lit, the air thick with a mixture of incense and the cold sterility of metal. A massive, translucent portal flickered at the far end, casting the imposing silhouette of the Shallit'Biru across the room. High Admiral Voss, a veteran of a hundred conquests, found himself standing rigid, his usual commanding presence shrinking beneath the weight of his superior's fury.

*"Do you mean to tell me," the Shallit'Biru's voice reverberated, laced with venomous disbelief, "that my highly classified... top secret... highly strategic outpost is gone... BECAUSE OF THE LOCAL WILDLIFE?!?"*

Voss swallowed hard. The Shallit'Biru's presence, even though a projection, made his throat dry. He had faced warlords, insurrections, and planetary sieges, but nothing compared to the suffocating aura of the Shallit'Biru's displeasure.

*"I..." Voss hesitated, his usual unwavering tone faltering. "We... underestimated the creatures, My Shallit."*

*"Underestimated?" The Shallit'Biru's voice dropped to a dangerous hush. "No one bothered to take precautions against the ferocious beasts whose homes we invaded?"*

Voss clenched his fists behind his back, struggling to maintain composure. *"We assumed they were primitive, incapable of organized resistance. They were mere animals."*

*"Yet they turned out to be smarter than your entire regiment stationed there!" The Shallit'Biru's fury burned through the projection, the flickering light intensifying as if the very room trembled at his wrath. "And now, thanks to your incompetence, we are forced to accelerate our assault on Mer'Kuri!"*

Voss straightened at the mention of Mer'Kuri. That had not been the plan... at least, not yet. *"My Shallit, our forces are still repositioning,"* he interjected cautiously. *"An early assault..."*

*"...will happen as I command," the Shallit'Biru interrupted, his words sharp as a blade. "Try not to let the local wildlife there get the better of you!"*

With a final, thunderous slam, the portal shut, leaving the chamber in eerie silence.

Voss exhaled sharply, his jaw tightening. He turned to the officer present, who had stood several feet back; silent as a statue during the exchange.

*"Prepare the fleet," Voss muttered, his voice regaining its steel. "If we must strike Mer'Kuri ahead of schedule... we will ensure that nothing... man or beast... stands in our way."*

He took a slow step forward, fists clenched at his sides. The rage he had suppressed in front of the Shallit'Biru now seethed to the surface. His voice, once steady, now cracked like a whip through the chamber.

*"Now go and find out... WHERE'S MY SHUTTLE!"*

## A Corridor of Fire

The air was still.

A low, steady hum pulsed through the ship's bulkheads; the only sign of the massive power coursing through its veins. Kael and Lysara moved carefully through the dim corridor, their steps soundless against the cold metal floor. Overhead, cables lined the ceiling like tangled roots, flickering faintly with energy. The reactor was close now... just a few more turns.

Kael slowed his pace, lifting a hand. Lysara halted beside him, pressing against the wall.

He didn't hear anything... but he could feel it. A presence ahead.

Moving as one, they edged forward until they reached the next junction. Kael peered around the corner.

Five Draetheon soldiers stood near the corridor leading to the reactor. Their weapons were holstered, their postures relaxed, unaware of the intruders just yards away. One of them spoke in a low voice, checking something on his wrist console.

*"No response from command," the soldier muttered. "Probably just com interference."*

Another scoffed. *"Or incompetence."*

**Lysara** leaned in close, her breath warm against Kael's ear. *"We need to get past them."*

**Kael's** fingers tightened around his blade. *"Quietly."*

She nodded. *"I'll take the left. You handle the rest?"*

Kael gave a slow, confident partial-smile. *"I was hoping you'd say that."*

Lysara moved first. She slipped into the darkness like a whisper, circling toward her target. Kael exhaled, calming his heartbeat, feeling the flow of movement around him. He stepped forward, slow and controlled. The nearest soldier didn't even sense him... until it was too late.

Kael's blade whispered through the air, slicing through the soft gap in the soldier's armor. A muffled gasp. A body caught before it hit the floor.

Lysara struck next. A quick, precise shot to the temple. No sound. No time for a cry.

But then...

A flicker of movement.

One of the remaining soldiers turned, eyes widening.

*"Intrud...!"*

Kael moved before the shout could finish. He surged forward, his blade flashing in the dim light. The soldier barely had time to raise his rifle before Kael struck; the force of the impact sending him staggering backward.

Then the chaos erupted.

The remaining two soldiers scrambled; weapons raised. Lysara fired first, dropping one with a precise shot. But the last one was faster. He dove for cover, returning fire.

Kael didn't hesitate.

He reached deep, calling upon his Solari training... not just speed, not just skill, but instinct. His blade became an extension of his will. He sidestepped the blast, twisting his body at an unnatural angle, letting the energy bolt pass harmlessly by. Before the soldier could fire again, Kael was already upon him.

A sharp strike... disarm. A second strike... disable.

The soldier slumped, unconscious.

**Lysara** lowered her blaster, shaking her head. *"That... was quiet?"*

**Kael** calming his Ra. *"Could've been quieter."*

She smirked, turning toward the reactor door. *"Come on. We're almost..."*

A new voice cut through the dimly lit corridor.

*"Going somewhere, Princess?"*

Both Lysara and Kael froze.

**Commander Typhon** stood at the far end of the hall; her armored form framed by the shadows. Three soldiers flanked her, weapons held at ease... but their eyes sharp and ready.

**Lysara** (Recognizing Commander Typhon): *"Well... We have some unfinished business... Don't we?"*

## The Engine Room

The corridor leading to the engine room was eerily silent.

Krynn and Xal moved with steady precision, their footfalls muffled by the ship's industrial hum. The air smelled of heated metal and faint coolant fumes, a sign they were nearing the core systems.

**Krynn** exhaled slowly. *"Too quiet,"* he muttered.

**Xal** glanced at him. *"You prefer noise?"*

*"Noise means predictability."* **Krynn's** sharp eyes scanned the dimly lit passageway. *"Silence means surprises."*

As if on cue... the alarms blared to life.

A deep, pulsing klaxon rang through the ship, flashing red lights painting the metal walls in warning streaks. **Krynn's** jaw tightened. *"Damn it..."*

*"They found Lysara and Kael,"* **Xal** said, already shifting his stance.

Then... movement.

Before they could fully react, three Draetheon soldiers emerged from a side corridor, weapons raised. They moved fast, already closing in... Krynn tensed, ready to strike.

But before he even took his first step...

Xal was faster.

The first soldier barely had time to aim before Xal disarmed him with a single fluid strike. His blade flashed in the crimson warning lights... one clean motion, and the soldier collapsed.

The second fired... Xal was already moving. A twist, a pivot, a blade through the gap in the armor. A sharp gasp, then silence.

The third tried to retreat, scrambling for cover... Xal was on him in a blink. A strike to the throat, a swift takedown.

It was over before Krynn had even drawn his weapon.

Krynn raised an eyebrow, genuinely surprised. He glanced down at the fallen soldiers, then at Xal, who was already retracting his Ra surge.

A smirk tugged at **Krynn's** lips.

*"Hmmm... A Solari warrior at my side... Now I get it."*

**Xal** simply nodded. *"You coming?"*

Krynn let out a short chuckle, shaking his head as they pressed forward toward the engine room.

As Krynn and Xal stepped into the engine room, the pulsating hum of the ship grew louder, its energy almost tangible in the thick air. Massive turbines spun in the background, casting eerie shadows against the cold walls.

Krynn immediately went on alert, scanning the room. The flickering red lights only intensified the sense of impending danger.

Then he saw him.

Standing near the central control station, arms crossed, eyes locked onto Xal... **Captain Dren Malgrith**.

Malgrith didn't move. His posture was calm, almost serene, but the cold glint in his eyes said everything. He had been waiting.

Xal didn't flinch. His gaze remained steady as he approached. The tension between them was thick, unspoken, yet undeniably charged.

*"You've come a long way, Solari,"* Malgrith said, his voice smooth, almost mocking. *"I wondered when you'd grace us with your presence."*

Krynn's eyes flicked between the two. *"You know him?"*

**Xal's** eyes remained locked on Malgrith, his posture tense but controlled. *"No... but he knows me."*

Malgrith's grin widened, a twisted gleam of satisfaction in his eyes. *"I saw you on the monitor a little while ago. I had to come see for myself. One of the Two Suns,"* he said, his voice oozing with disdain.

*"My Shallit will be pleased when I bring you to him. He's been trying to get you away from the Solari... train you to be invincible warriors... ever since you were born."*

Xal's expression darkened in an instant. His breath quickened, but his composure remained... barely.

*"So it was your Shallit that tried to kill my parents and kidnap Kael and me?"* Xal's voice was like ice, every word dripping with bitter sarcasm. *"I can't wait to meet him."*

Malgrith's eyes glinted with dark amusement. *"I've been hearing that the Two Suns are now the best the Solari has to offer... I mean to test your skills."*

Malgrith slowly stepped forward, his boots making a soft clink against the metal floor of the engine room. The atmosphere grew heavy with tension as he moved, the distance between them shrinking. His eyes... still fixed on Xal... calculating. He was preparing for battle... his posture... predatory.

But Krynn... silent as always... didn't make a sound. He simply stepped to the side, giving the two men space.

Xal's gaze flickered toward Krynn for just a moment; his voice low but firm. *"Krynn, complete our mission. I'll handle this."*

Krynn's gaze lingered on Xal for a second longer before he turned. He started to make his way toward the rear of the engine room, while Xal and Malgrith slowly danced.